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AUTHOR Berney, Tomi D.; Plotkin, Donna
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ABSTRACT

This report evaluates the implementation and outcome of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title VII program, Choosing Optional Infused Career Education (Project CHOICE) in Springfield Gardens High School in Queens (New York) and Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn (New York) for the 1988-89 school year. The project was created to combat the high dropout rate in language minority student populations. Its main objective was for Spanish- and Haitian Creole-speaking special education students of limited English proficiency (LEP) to acquire optimal language proficiency in English while developing reading and writing skills in their native language (Native Language Arts, NLA). The project also provided students with career orientation and information. The following findings are discussed: (1) students made significant gains on the Language Assessment Battery; (2) course grades suggested that both Spanish and Haitian Creole-speaking students acquired NLA skills; (3) the program met its content area objective in science and social studies but not in mathematics; (4) the project met its objective in career education; (5) the dropout rate of program students at both schools was more than 10 percent lower than that of mainstream students; and (6) data were unavailable to assess the objectives for parent involvement and staff awareness of student needs. Recommendations are made on how to improve the program. Three tables are included. (JS)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

CHOOSING OPTIONAL CAREER EDUCATION PROJECT CHOICE
Grant Number: T003A80102

1988-89

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EVALUATION SECTION
John E. Schoener, Chief Administrator
April 1990

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

CHOOSING OPTIONAL CAREER EDUCATION
PROJECT CHOICE
Grant Number: T003A80102

1988-89

Prepared by
The Multicultural/Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit
Tomi Deutsch Berney, Evaluation Manager
Donna Plotkin, Evaluation Consultant

New York City Board of Education
Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
Robert Tobias, Director

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CHOOSING OPTIONAL INFUSED CAREER EDUCATION FOR
STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS
PROJECT CHOICE

1988-89

SUMMARY

- Project CHOICE was partially implemented. During the 1988-89 school year, students received instruction in English as a Second Language, Native Language Arts, and bilingual content areas. Computers were only available during the spring semester at one site.

- The project met its objectives in English as a Second Language, career education, staff development, and dropout rate. It partially met its content area objective. Lack of data made it impossible to evaluate the objectives in Native Language Arts, staff awareness of pupil needs and problems, and parental involvement.

Choosing Optional Infused Career Education (Project CHOICE) completed the first year of a three-year Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) Title VII funding cycle in 1988-89. One hundred eighty-five Spanish-speaking students of limited English proficiency (LEP students) at Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn and 114 Haitian Creole/French-speaking students at Springfield Gardens High School in Queens participated in the program.

The project was created to combat the high dropout rate in language minority student populations. It provided supplementary individualized instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L); Native Language Arts (N.L.A); and bilingual mathematics, science, and social studies. Project CHOICE intended to provide students with a bilingual resource/computer center at each school. Due to delays in the hiring of staff and in the procurement of computer equipment at both sites, however, the project could not be fully implemented. At Springfield Gardens High School, students had access to computer assisted equipment from a previous project, and staff provided computer instruction in mathematics and English. Fort Hamilton High School students had no access to computers. Project staff at both centers offered tutoring, help in preparing for exams, career and college advisement, academic and personal counseling, and family outreach. The project also provided cultural and career-oriented trips for students, staff development activities, and basic skills classes for parents of program students.

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) assessed the program objectives in English skills development by comparing pre- and posttest scores on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB). Students showed significant gains, indicating that Project CHOICE met its E.S.L. objective. OREA could not

evaluate the N.L.A. objectives because of the lack of appropriate data. However, course grades suggested that both Spanish and Haitian Creole-speaking students acquired N.L.A. skills. Project CHOICE met its content area objective in science and social studies but not in mathematics. The project met its objective in career education. The dropout rate of program students at both schools was more than ten percent lower than that of mainstream (monolingual) students, therefore Project CHOICE met this objective. Data were not available for OREA to assess the objectives for parental involvement and staff awareness of student needs.

A limitation of the program was the need to use non-guidance personnel in guidance functions.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- The project should provide the data necessary to evaluate all project objectives, or revise the objectives so that they are measurable by existing instruments.

- If funds permit, the project should hire bilingual counselors to relieve non-guidance project personnel of their present guidance functions.

- Provide computers at both sites.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (E.S.E.A.) Title VII program, Choosing Optional Infused Career Education (Project CHOICE). In 1988-89, the project completed the first year of a three-year funding cycle. The project's main objective was for special education students of limited English proficiency (LEP students) to acquire optimal language proficiency in English while developing reading and writing skills in their native language. The project also provided students with career orientation and information. The target population consisted of Spanish- and Haitian Creole-speaking LEP students at varying levels of English and native language proficiency and academic preparation. Project sites were Springfield Gardens and Fort Hamilton High Schools.

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

Both schools had a history of service to non-English-speaking students. The population served by Project CHOICE, LEP students who also have limited reading and writing skills in their native language, has been historically underserved in the New York City educational system.

SETTING

Springfield Gardens High School is located in a Queens neighborhood of predominantly black working-class families living in one- and two-family houses. Fort Hamilton High School in Brooklyn is situated in a predominantly white middle-class

neighborhood. Project students came from surrounding low-income areas.

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

Project CHOICE students came from Haiti and the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean and Central and South America. All project students were LEP, and the majority were recent immigrants. At least 50 percent of project students were over-age for their grade. (See Table 1.) The project coordinator estimated that 30 percent of program students at both sites were illiterate in their native language and deficient in content areas because they had had little or no education in their native countries. Those students who had attended school in their native countries often had better academic skills.

Many of the students' families were undocumented aliens. The parents of some students had sent them to stay with relatives in New York so that their education would not be interrupted by political turmoil. Other parents had immigrated to the United States ahead of their children. Often, the difficulties in adjusting to changing relationships, and the loss of parental control, interest, or financial support led some students to drop out of school. Some of the students also experienced difficulties at home due to conflicts in values, the need to assume childcare responsibilities, and the lack of living space. Some suffered from malnutrition. Due to financial need, most of the students were either looking for jobs or were employed part-time.

TABLE 1

Number of Program Students by Age and Grade[a]

Age	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
14	16	1	0	0	17
15	27	13	1	0	41
16	29	23	13	0	65
17	11	23	17	10	61
18	9	12	14	12	47
19	6	4	11	13	34
20	0	2	5	19	26
21	0	1	1	4	6
22	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	98	79	62	59	298[b]

Over-Age Students

Number	55	42	31	37	165
Percent	56.1	53.2	50.0	62.7	55.4

Note. Outlined boxes indicate expected age range for grade.

[a] As of June 1989.

[b] Data were missing for three students.

- Fifty-five percent of project students were over-age for their grade.

STAFF

Title VII staff consisted of the project director and, a each site, a resource specialist and paraprofessional. The resource specialist at Fort Hamilton High School worked full- at the resource center during the spring. At Springfield Gar High School, the resource specialist taught Native Language A (N.L.A.) and social studies in the fall. In the spring, this resource specialist taught social studies, assisted the assis principal of foreign languages in an N.L.A. class, and provid computer-assisted instruction. Both resource specialists tut and counseled project students.

The paraprofessional at Fort Hamilton High School worked the resource center for two periods a day and assisted studen in content area and N.L.A. classes for five periods. At Springfield Gardens High School, the paraprofessional worked time in the resource room, tutoring and providing students wi computer instruction.

The resource specialists at both sites and the paraprofessional at Fort Hamilton High School had B.A. degree and several years of experience in education. All project st were native speakers of the languages of the project students they served. The schools' principals and the assistant principals of administration and foreign languages supervised project's on-site staff members.

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Project CHOICE offered students instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), N.L.A., and bilingual content area subjects. Students participated in a variety of cultural and career-oriented trips and other extracurricular activities. The project provided in-service training for staff members, and E.S.L. and General Education Diploma (G.E.D.) classes for the parents of participating students.

Project CHOICE had a resource center at each site where project staff provided tutoring, counseling, and career advisement. Delays in delivery and installation of computer equipment precluded computer-assisted instruction at Fort Hamilton High School, but Springfield Gardens High School had access to a previous project's equipment and provided training in computer use and computer-assisted instruction.

REPORT FORMAT

This report is organized as follows: Chapter II describes the evaluation methodology; Chapter III presents the activities of the project and examines its implementation objectives; Chapter IV investigates the student outcome objectives; and Chapter V offers conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the evaluation.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation assessed two major areas, program implementation and outcome. Evaluation questions included the following:

Process/Implementation

- Did the program select students for participation according to specific criteria?
- Did the project implement activities to develop English language proficiency as proposed?
- Did the project implement activities to develop native language proficiency in Spanish and in French/Haitian Creole as proposed?
- Did the project provide students with bilingual support services?
- Did program students participate in career education activities?
- Did program staff take advantage of relevant college courses and in-service training?
- Did any activities encourage parental involvement?

Outcome

- What was the average Normal Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.) gain on the LAB?
- Did program students demonstrate a significant increase in native language achievement?
- What percentage of program students passed their courses in mathematics, science, and social studies?
- How did the dropout rate of program students compare with that of mainstream students?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Sample

An OREA field consultant observed classes in E.S.L., N.L.A., social studies, and science. She interviewed program and school staff, including the program director, the schools' principals, the resource specialists, and the paraprofessionals. OREA provided a student data form for each participating student in both the fall and spring. Project CHOICE returned 301 completed forms.

Instruments

The field consultant used OREA-developed observation and interview schedules. Project personnel completed OREA-developed data retrieval forms to report student demographic, attendance, and achievement data. The project director completed an OREA-developed questionnaire.

Data Collection

Interviews and observations took place during the spring semester. OREA staff members supplied the project director with a questionnaire and student data forms in both the fall and spring. The project returned the student data forms at the end of each semester and the questionnaires at the end of the spring semester.

Data Analysis

OREA used the Language Assessment Battery to assess improvement in English proficiency. Project CHOICE students were tested at grade level each spring. Students' raw scores were converted to Normal Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.) scores, which have multiple advantages over other scoring methods. They are standard, normalized, and form an equal interval scale. ("Standard" indicates that the unit of measurement is a fraction of the standard deviation of the original distribution of raw scores; "normalized" refers to the fact that the scale is adjusted for the norm group so that its distribution has the shape of a normal distribution; and "equal interval scales" allow for legitimate aggregation or averaging of scores.) Project students' N.C.E.s indicated their standing in relation to the national average of 50.

To assess the significance of students' achievement in English, OREA computed a correlated *t*-test on LAB N.C.E. scores. The *t*-test determined whether the difference between the pre- and posttest scores was significantly greater than would be expected by chance variation alone.

To insure representative achievement data, OREA included only those students who had been in the program for at least five months and had attended classes for at least 100 school days. OREA extrapolated to estimate full-year scores of late-arriving and early-exiting students.

Limitations

Since all LEP students are entitled to receive bilingual and E.S.L. services, OREA was unable to select an equivalent control group. In addition, the project neglected to provide the data necessary to assess three of the proposed objectives.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS: IMPLEMENTATION

Project CHOICE students received E.S.L.; N.L.A.; bilingual mathematics, science, and social studies; and, at Springfield Gardens High School, computer-assisted instruction. The project provided career education and tutoring to students, in-service training to staff, and activities for parental involvement.

STUDENT PLACEMENT AND PROGRAMMING

All students eligible for Project CHOICE had scores under the twenty-first percentile on the English version of the Language Assessment Battery (LAB).* Teacher recommendations and LAB scores determined students' initial placement in E.S.L. courses.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The project carried out instructional activities in E.S.L., N.L.A., and content area subjects.

English as a Second Language

Students could take E.S.L. reading and writing courses on the beginning, intermediate, advanced, and transitional levels at both sites.

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*The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of non-native speakers of English in order to determine whether they can participate effectively in classes taught in English. Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the LAB are entitled to bilingual and E.S.L. services.

An OREA field consultant observed an intermediate-level E.S.L. class of 34 at Springfield Gardens High School. The teacher distributed a handout consisting of a four-paragraph essay with follow-up questions. The teacher read the essay aloud, called on students to read aloud, corrected pronunciation, wrote new vocabulary on the blackboard, and asked volunteers for definitions. The students wrote their answers to the questions on the handout in their notebooks, and the teacher called on them to recite both the questions and answers.

Native Language Arts

At both sites, the assistant principal for foreign languages was in charge of N.L.A. instruction. Springfield Gardens High School provided elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels of French, preferred by the Haitian students in N.L.A.; Fort Hamilton High School provided the same levels of Spanish.

The OREA field consultant observed an intermediate-level Spanish N.L.A. class of 21 at Fort Hamilton High School. The teacher circulated around the room, assisting the students while they worked on completing four sentences requiring verb conjugation. The teacher called on a student to write the answers on the blackboard and reviewed the work. Then, one student read aloud from a textbook passage on non-violent solutions to problems, as the rest of the class followed silently. The teacher paired the students and asked each pair to offer and discuss a non-violent solution to one of five

potentially violent situations described in the text. All communication was in Spanish.

Content Area Subjects

Springfield Gardens High School offered participating students bilingual content area classes in mathematics, science, and social studies. Teachers, with the assistance of a bilingual paraprofessional, used E.S.L. methodology to teach courses in introduction to occupations, business mathematics, keyboarding, and computer science.

At Fort Hamilton High School, students could take bilingual mathematics, science, and social studies. A paraprofessional assisted in a keyboarding class, which was taught using E.S.L. methodology.

An OREA field consultant observed a biology class with 21 students at Springfield Gardens High School. The teacher gave a presentation on how environment and genetics interact to determine personal traits. The students asked and answered questions while the teacher wrote key words and concepts on the blackboard in both Haitian Creole and English. A student summarized the lesson aloud. All oral communication was in Haitian Creole.

The OREA consultant also observed a consumer mathematics class with 25 students at Fort Hamilton High School. Students worked on solving a problem postulating the division of an inheritance into four unequal parts. The teacher circulated around the room, assisted students with their work, then called

on a student to write his solution to the problem on the blackboard. All oral communication was in Spanish.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Project CHOICE offered extensive support services but had no formal objective in this area. It did propose objectives in career education, staff development, staff awareness of pupil needs and problems, and parental involvement.

Support Services

Neither school programmed students for support services, nor did students at either site have free periods. Students came in during their lunch periods, or the staff removed them from their classes. Staff saw students who needed intensive remediation several times a week.

Because neither school had a bilingual counselor, project staff provided program students with academic and personal counseling, tutoring, and career and college advisement. These duties occupied much of their time.

Project staff also assisted students with homework projects and reports, depending on their expressed need, maintained ongoing contact with the students' teachers, and contacted families when necessary.

Career Education

The program objective for career education was:

- As a result of the program, all project students will participate in at least two career education conferences.

Project students at both sites attended more than two career education conferences. Project CHOICE met its proposed career education objective.

Staff Development

The program objective for staff development was:

- Ninety percent of the program staff will demonstrate professional growth by completing college courses and/or by attending in-service training sessions.

The resource specialist and paraprofessional at Fort Hamilton and Springfield Gardens High Schools completed college courses on topics related to their professional responsibilities. During the summer, the project coordinator completed two courses.

Title VII staff members also participated in in-service staff development activities. Project staff at Springfield Gardens High School attended several staff meetings focusing on curriculum development and adaptation in mathematics, science, and social studies; computer-assisted instruction; and career counseling. Project staff at Fort Hamilton High School attended staff meetings to discuss curriculum development and adaptation in N.L.A., science, and social studies, and a staff development workshop entitled "Communicating Mathematics."

Since all five Title VII staff members enrolled in college courses and attended in-service training sessions, Project CHOICE met its staff development objective.

Staff Awareness of Pupil Needs and Problems

The program objective for staff awareness of pupil needs and problems was:

- As a result of participation in the program, 80 percent of project staff will demonstrate an increase in awareness of pupil needs and problems as indicated by a 5-point scale of problems and needs inventory.

OREA was unable to assess this objective as proposed, since neither site provided the necessary data.

Parental Involvement

The program objective for parental involvement was:

- The attendance of parents of program students at school functions will be ten to 15 percent higher than that of parents of mainstream students.

The program apprised parents of activities by letters in their native language. Still, parental participation was low. At Fort Hamilton High School, the number of parents attending monthly advisory council meetings varied between eight and 15. Ten parents at Springfield Gardens High School, and 15 parents at Fort Hamilton High School, attended basic skills classes in E.S.L. and G.E.D. preparation offered twice weekly in the spring semester.

OREA was unable to determine whether Project CHOICE met its parental involvement objective, as the project did not provide attendance data for the parents of mainstream students.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS: OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES

The project proposed instructional objectives in E.S.L., N.L.A., and content area subjects.

English as a Second Language

The evaluation objective for the development of English language skills was:

- As a result of participation in the program, program students will make statistically significant gains in English language proficiency.

Project CHOICE provided complete LAB pre- and posttest scores for 139 students in grades nine through 12. (See Table 2.) Grade N.C.E. gains ranged from 2.07 to 4.48. The mean N.C.E. gain for the project was 6.3 (s.d.=10.3). All gains were statistically significant ($p < .05$). Project CHOICE met its E.S.L. objective.

Native Language Arts

The evaluation objectives for the development of native language proficiency were:

- As a result of participating in the program, the Spanish-dominant participants will demonstrate a significant increase in Spanish-language achievement as indicated by improvement at the .05 level of statistical significance when results of a teacher-made instrument are analyzed using a correlated *t*-test.

Data on the LAB (Spanish version) were available for 50 project students in the spring of 1988 (pretest) and for 18 in the spring of 1989 (posttest). However, only one of these

TABLE 2

Pretest/Posttest N.C.E. Differences on the Language Assessment Battery, by Grade

Grade	Number of Students	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Posttest Mean	Posttest S.D.	Difference Mean	Difference S.D.	t Value
9	43	9.8	9.6	14.6	12.2	4.8	9.8	3.18*
10	43	13.9	9.7	21.2	12.8	7.3	10.9	4.41*
11	30	11.3	9.1	20.8	12.9	9.5	11.7	4.48*
12	23	17.7	9.1	20.8	11.1	3.1	7.2	2.07*
TOTAL	139	12.7	9.7	19.0	12.6	6.3	10.4	7.18*

*p<.05

- Students in every grade made significant gains from pretest to posttest on the LAB.
- Posttest gains were greatest in eleventh grade.

students had scores in both the pretest and the posttest. Therefore, the objective could not be assessed as proposed. (OREA analysts did examine students' performance in Spanish N.L.A. courses. Results show that 86 percent of 106 students whom data were available in the fall and 97 percent of 91 students in the spring achieved a passing grade of 65 or more

- As a result of participating in the program, the Haitian Creole-dominant participants will demonstra significant increase in native-language achievement indicated by improvement at the .05 level of statistical significance when results of a teacher- instrument are analyzed using a correlated t-test.

There was no instrument available to measure students' native language improvement, therefore, OREA could not evalua this objective as stated. (An analysis of student performanc Haitian N.L.A courses, however, revealed that 80 percent of t 51 students for whom data were available in the fall and 96 percent of 50 students in the spring achieved a passing grade 65 or more.)

Content Area Subjects

The evaluation objective for content area subjects was:

- At least 75 percent of program students enrolled in mathematics, science, and social studies courses wi score at or above the passing criterion of 65 each semester.

At least 80 percent of project students achieved the pas criterion in science and social studies both semesters. (See Table 3.) In mathematics, students' performance was very goo

TABLE 3

Passing Rates in Content Area Courses

	Fall		Spring		Total	
	Number of Students	Percent Passing[a]	Number of Students	Percent Passing[a]	Number of Students	Percent Passing[a]
Mathematics	181	68.5	161	65.8	342	67.3
Science	135	80.0	127	86.6	262	83.2
Social Studies	189	88.4	166	84.9	355	86.8

[a]Passing grade was 65.

- Over 80 percent of the students in both semesters scored above the passing criterion in science and social studies.
- Over 65 percent of the students in both semesters scored above the passing criterion in mathematics.

but did not quite meet the criterion. Therefore, the objective for content area subjects was only partially met.

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL OUTCOMES

Project CHOICE proposed one non-instructional outcome objective: comparative dropout rates for program and mainstream students.

Dropout Rate

- As a result of participation in the program, the dropout rate of program students will be ten to 15 percent lower than that of mainstream students.

The dropout rate of program students at Springfield Gardens High School was 0.09 percent and that of mainstream students was 4.7 percent. At Fort Hamilton High School, the dropout rate for program students was 0.0 percent and for mainstream students 16.8 percent. At both sites the dropout rate of participating students was more than ten percent lower than that of mainstream students. Project CHOICE met its dropout rate objective.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During its first year of operation, Project CHOICE served 299 LEP students at Springfield Gardens and Fort Hamilton High Schools. It provided supplementary instruction in E.S.L., N.L.A., and content area courses.

Due to delays in hiring staff and in the delivery and installation of computer equipment at both sites, the project was not fully implemented. During the spring semester, the project at Springfield Gardens High School was able to use computers left by a previous project. Fort Hamilton High School did not have this kind of resource to draw on and therefore did not offer computers for student use.

The project staff offered tutoring to students, and, in the absence of bilingual guidance counselors at either school, spent much time counseling project students in their native language.

Project CHOICE met its objective in staff development, as all staff members acquired college credits and took advantage of in-service training. Because students attended more than four career conferences, Project CHOICE also met its objective in career education. Students showed a significant increase in English language skills, demonstrating that Project CHOICE realized its E.S.L. objective. The project partially met its objective in the content areas, as the proposed percentage of students passed science and social studies but not mathematics. The project met its objective for dropout rate. The project did not provide data necessary for OREA to assess objectives in staff

awareness of pupil needs and problems or in parental involvement. Data were not adequate for OREA to evaluate the N.L.A. objectives. (OREA used course-grades to assess performance and determined that at least 81 percent of the students in each class achieved a passing grade.)

Although participation was low, Project CHOICE made strong attempts to involve parents by providing them with E.S.L. and G.E.D. classes.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- The project should provide the data necessary to evaluate all project objectives, or revise the objectives so that they are measurable by existing instruments.
- If funds permit, the project should hire bilingual counselors to relieve non-guidance project personnel of their present guidance functions.
- Provide computers at both sites.